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ABSTRACT

This ERIC "FAST Bib," which focuses on gender issues in language and writing, presents annotations of 23 ERIC documents and journal articles published between 1987 and 1991. The first section of the FAST Bib is an overview; the second section is divided between issues that are relevant to the elementary and secondary levels and issues that emerge at the post-secondary level. The final section offers a specifically feminist viewpoint of issues in literacy. (RS)

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FAST Bib No. 63

Gender Issues in Language and Writing

by Patricia Dickinson

Feminist studies and research on gender bias have begun to open educators' eyes to the need for evaluation and change. Educators need to examine their values, beliefs, and actions in order to understand the relationship between gender and language use. It is not enough to be aware of overt stereotypes, non-inclusive language, and tendencies toward bias; educators must learn to examine the way they have been socialized and how that affects teaching styles and methods.

This ERIC *FAST Bib*, which focuses on gender issues in language and writing, is divided into three sections. The first section is an overview. The second section is divided between issues that are relevant at the elementary and secondary levels and issues that emerge at the Post-Secondary level. The final section offers a specifically feminist viewpoint of issues in literacy.

Abstracts for some of the articles cited here have been abbreviated to conform to the FAST Bib format. Three types of citations are provided in the bibliography: ERIC documents, journal articles, and papers.

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Overview

Baldwin, Jill; Kielbaso, Gloria. *Working Together: A Sex Equity Training Manual*. Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1990. 237 p. [ED 326 613]

Contains nine learning modules on sex equity topics, each of which provides one or more lesson plans for learning activities that combat traditional sex role stereotypes and behaviors.

Chapman, Anne. "Description of Workshop Series for Precollege Teachers on Women and Gender, Including Topics Covered, Readings Used, and Sample Handouts." 1989. 18 p. [ED 313 322]

Describes a curriculum development project designed to help pre-college teachers integrate new information and insights based on women's studies and gender scholarship into their teaching. Sample topics include the following: the history of concern with women and gender; shared and gender specific experience and behavior; and pedagogical implications of the ways society is gendered.

Darr, Ralph F., Jr. "Teacher Characteristics." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, 1990. 21 p. [ED 327 489]

Suggests that today's teachers are less likely to try to communicate with minority and female students at all grade levels, and that white females are still omitted

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from most of the teacher-student interaction in the classroom.

Dickel, Michael. "Wendy's, the Potato Head Kids, and Me: Dealing with Sexist Representations in Language and Culture or, Un-wrapping the Hamburger." Paper presented at the Annual Fall Conference of the Midwest Writing Centers, 1990. 15 p. [ED 325 848]

Discusses the sexist language on "Kid's Meal" boxes which portray women as incompetent, passive caregivers, lacking rank and authority, and men as authoritative, adventurous, and rescuers. Describes how discussion of the boxes' inherent values can help students recognize the importance of equal representation, as well as the content of that representation.

Finley, Paris; Kleinfeld, Judith, Ed. "Gender Wars at John Adams High School, A Case Study," *Teaching Cases in Cross-Cultural Education No. 6.* Alaska University, Fairbanks, Alaska, 1990. 73 p. [ED 325 270]

Describes a series of conflicts centering on gender issues at a large metropolitan high school. Accompanied by discussion questions designed to present prospective teachers with complex professional problems that ask them to interpret the situation and decide upon possible solutions.

Kernberger, Carolyn. "Just Say No to He/Men, or Teaching Nonsexist Language in the ESL Classroom." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the New Mexico Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1990. 21 p. [ED 317 061]

Discusses the teaching of nonsexist language and reviews the history of the awareness of gender bias in language. Outlines the arguments for and against nonsexist language teaching.

Natalle, Elizabeth J. "Gender and Communication Theory," *Communication Education*, v40 n1 p94-98 Jan 1991.

Provides a syllabus and teaching notes for a course on gender and communication theory. Presents teaching notes based on the assumption that a course grounded in a gender perspective requires style in the classroom that complements the course content.

Sadker, Myra; and others. "Sex, Sexism, and the Preparation of Educators," *Peabody Journal of Education*, v64 n4 p213-24 Sum 1987.

Reports findings from 43 in-depth interviews with college students about sex and sexism in school. Implications for teacher and administrator preparation.

Gender Issues in Language and Writing

K-12

Collis, Betty; Ollila, Lloyd. "The Effect of Computer Use on Grade 1 Children's Gender Stereotypes about Reading, Writing, and Computer Use," *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, v24 n1 p14-20 Fall 1990.

Findings from a study of 120 first-grade children who had regular access to language-arts computer experiences indicate (1) young children do not perceive reading as a female activity; (2) for writing there was no consistent gender association; (3) computer use was seen as a masculine activity by all children.

Kleifgen, Jo Anne. *Computers and Opportunities for Literacy Development. ERIC/CUE Digest No. 54.* CS: ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education, New York, N.Y., 1989. 4 p. [ED 311 120]

Suggests that instead of reducing educational inequalities, computer technology may have widened the gap in educational opportunity. Discusses several factors resulting in inequities, one of which is limited access and applicability for female students.

Many, Joyce E. "Sex Roles from a Child's Point of View: An Analysis of Children's Writing," *Reading Psychology*, v10 n4 p357-70 Fall 1989.

Examines writing samples of male and female authors in grades K-12 to determine the frequency of male and female characters, the number of and types of attributes given to male and female characters, and the number of and types of roles assigned to male and female characters.

Ollila, Lloyd; and others. "Gender-Related Preferences for the Choice of Particular Animals as Writing Topics in Grade 1." *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, v22 n2 p37-41 Win 1989.

Describes a study in which four hundred fifty first-grade children were asked to imagine they were animals and to write about their animal selections. Boys tended to identify themselves with animals characterized as strong, dangerous, or wild. Girls tended to link themselves with animals that are weak, safe, or tame.

Shapiro, Jon. "Sex-Role Appropriateness of Reading and Reading Instruction," *Reading Psychology*, v11 n3 p241-69 1990.

Studies the attitudes toward reading as a sex-role appropriate behavior in classrooms using basal reading instruction or the whole language approach. Suggests that the nature of instruction has a significant effect on

boys' view of the sex-role appropriateness of reading and writing.

Post Secondary

Bleich, David. "Sexism in Academic Styles of Learning," *Journal of Advanced Composition*, v10 n2 p231-47 Fall 1990.

Argues that educational discourse styles are affected to an excessive degree by sexism. Suggests that the values underlying sexism are so deeply ingrained as to be difficult to detect.

Keroes, Jo. "But What Do They Say? Gender and the Content of Student Writing," *Discourse Processes*, v13 n2 p243-57 Apr-Jun 1990.

Analyzes several hundred essays written by an equal number of male and female college students in response to two separate prompts on a writing proficiency test. Finds partial support for the hypothesis that men focus on an individual's autonomy and women on relationships.

Papalewis, Rosemary. "Interpretation of Student Data: Contextual Variables and Cultural Implications." Paper presented at the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration, 1990. 28 p. [ED 328 166]

Examines teaching effectiveness through the communication style used by the instructor, as well as the biased expectations that can be held by instructors of their students' intellectual performance.

Peterson, Linda H. "Editing Women's Texts: Issues of Cultural Expectations in Editing and Evaluating Women's Writing." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1990. 8 p. [ED 318 033]

Raises several questions: To what extent do teachers' comments on students' autobiographical writing reflect unstated cultural assumptions about gender? To what extent do textbooks identify "good" autobiographical writing with the features of one gender or another? To what extent should teachers/editors attempt to be gender-neutral?

Rose, Shirley K. "Reading Representative Anecdotes of Literacy Practice; or 'See Dick and Jane Read and Write!'" "Rhetoric Review, v8 n2 p244-59 Spr 1990.

Reviews college students' compositions describing the acquisition of their literacy skills. Reports that males' anecdotes tend to reflect individual achievement and competition, whereas females' writings display a process and cooperation focus. Argues that new research must be conscious of these differences, or gender-blind studies may be gender-biased by default.

Sirc, Geoffrey. "Gender and 'Writing Formations' in First-Year Narratives." *Freshman English News*, v18 n1 p4-11 Fall 1989.

Examines gender differences in topic choice by analyzing freshman writers' narratives of an incident they witnessed. Finds that pronounced, gender-based patterns influence text production, with women demonstrating caring and nurturing values in everyday life and men engaging in romantic fantasies of self-aggrandizement or apocalyptic fascination with automobile accidents.

Focus on Feminist Issues

Ashton-Jones, Evelyn; Thomas, Dene Kay. "Composition, Collaboration, and Women's Ways of Knowing: A Conversation with Mary Belenky." *Journal of Advanced Composition*, v10 n2 p275-92 Fall 1990.

Presents an interview with psychologist and author Mary Field Belenky. Explores her collaborative work with three other authors in compiling findings on women's cognitive, intellectual, and ethical development. Identifies shortfalls in the traditional ways of looking at women. Notes greater recent attention paid to the teaching of writing.

Bannister, Linda. "Women's Rhetoric as Literature." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association, 1990. 13 p. [ED 325 846]

Explains that women's serious writing has not been considered rhetoric because of its pedagogical implications and association with practice, rather than theory. Discusses the different voice that women have which has not previously been recognized as rhetoric, but which is reinventing the rhetorical tradition and will be judged in part on the basis of relationship, growth, community, and learning.

Bannister, Linda. "The Feminine Rhetorics of Janet Emig and Andrea Lunsford." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1991. 14 p. [ED 328 918]

Argues that Janet Emig and Andrea Lunsford, two eminent women theorists, have been especially instrumental in creating a feminine rhetoric which is process-oriented, relational, integrated, and collaborative.

Damarin, Suzanne K. "Unthinking Educational Technology." In: *Proceedings of Selected Paper Pres-*

entations at the Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, 1990. 14 p. [ED 323 925]

Examines an approach to feminist "unthinking" and rethinking of educational technology. Concludes that the contributions of the teacher user and the female student user to the teaching-learning process are denied by the increasing use of educational technology. Suggests a number of questions that might guide feminist rethinking of educational technology.

McGann, Patrick. "Women and the Dichotomy of Literacy: Public/Private Discourse." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, 1988. 15 p. [ED 294 200]

Contends that males command a public discourse community of epic proportions, while women have traditionally been restricted to the private sphere. Calls for eliminating the emphasis in the classroom on argumentative discourse and correct usage, and for developing instead a community of cooperation and an awareness of many equally effective ways of communicating through writing.

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